

Giveaway Guru

Are you hip to rip-offs?



1. The holiday shopping season is in full swing. The best way to make sure you're not charged for purchases you didn't make is to:
 - A) Don't think about what you're spending until the holiday is over and all the bills come in.
 - B) Save your receipts to compare them to your monthly bill
 - C) Open a new credit card in every store you make a purchase
 - D) Throw away your receipts so no one can find them.
2. You're behind on your payments. The collection company is calling you at the office and at home, sometimes as late as 11 p.m. What are your rights?
 - A) You can stop a debt collector from contacting you simply by writing them a letter telling them to stop. They may not contact you again except to notify you that the debt collector or the creditor intends to take some specific action.
 - B) The federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act protects against harassing calls.
 - C) Debt collectors may not lie to you or call after 9 p.m.
 - D) All of the above.
3. You're starting a business and get an offer to send bulk email solicitations on your behalf. What do you think?
 - A) How convenient! Someone does the work and you get the word out on your business.
 - B) Sounds like a perfect marketing plan to reach more customers.
 - C) Better check into the CAN-SPAM Act and any state laws on sending bulk email.
 - D) Make sure the company sends your materials to at least 1,000 people, or it isn't worth the cost.
4. Several companies promise to find you a scholarship for college — if you pay them a fee. Go with:
 - A) One that "guarantees" to award you money.
 - B) One that requires only a small application fee in exchange for a "guaranteed" scholarship.
 - C) One that will write your scholarship applications for you.
 - D) None of the above.
5. You've seen ads for seminars that promise to show you how to make up to \$100,000 a year through investments. They include testimonials from people who say the system worked for them. What do you need to consider before signing up?
 - A) Go to the seminar and prepare for an increase in your income.
 - B) Use caution when considering seminars that promise earnings, regardless of your lack of experience or training.
 - C) Sign up, and if you don't like it, get your money back.
 - D) Call the people in the ad who claimed success.

Answers

1. **B.** By saving your receipts, you can double check your monthly statement and spot unauthorized charges.
2. **D.** While you have an obligation to pay your bills on time, you are protected by the federal Fair Debt Collections Practices Act. It requires that debt collectors treat you fairly and prohibits them from using threats or providing false information to collect debts.
3. **C.** Understand the requirements of the federal CAN-SPAM Act before sending bulk email — or hiring someone to do it for you. Visit [ftc.gov/spam](https://www.ftc.gov/spam) for more information.
4. **D.** No one can guarantee you a scholarship in exchange for a fee. Investigate the organization you're considering, and talk to a financial aid advisor before spending any money to search for a scholarship.
5. **B.** These seminar pitches tend to be curveballs! Consumers who invest in these “opportunities” rarely see any return on their investment and can't even recover the money they spent on the class.

Your Scam-o-meter:

Correct
answers:

- 0-1 You would be more hip if you hit the books. Check out the information for consumers on www.consumer.gov/ncpw.
- 2-3 Not Bad. You might want to check out the information for consumers at www.consumer.gov/ncpw.
- 4-5 ***Congratulations!*** You are truly a hip and enlightened consumer.

